Steps to assist the ailing tea industry

1197. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Darjeeling in Act will help Tea Industry", which appeared in the *Asian Age,* dated the 10th October, 2002;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the steps proposed to address the problem highlighted in the news-item, so as to assist the ailing Tea Industry to compete with neighbouring tea producing countries like Sri Lanka and Nepal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government has initiated action to protect Darjeeling tea under various legal frameworks that exist in different importing countries. The Darjeeling tea logo is registered in various countries including UK, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Portugal, USA, Japan, Egypt and Canada. The Darjeeling tea word and logo are registered as a Certification Trade Mark in India and would also be registered under the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act 1999, once it is operationalised.

(c) While Sri Lankan tea is not similar in character to Darjeeling tea and hence does not pose a direct competition *vis-a-vis* the requirements of the Darjeeling tea in export markets, Nepal tea poses a competitive challenge to Darjeeling tea. The agro-climauc condition, under which Nepal teas are grown, is closer to that of Darjeeling with the added advantage of newer bushes. Darjeeling tea, however, has greater brand value and image and the Government has taken action to protect the brand name legally as well as implement a monitoring system that will address the problem of alleged misuse.

WTO Summit at Doha

†1198. SHRI BALKAVI BAIRAGI:
PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tiie USA has expressed its inability to provide concession on the import of garments in the WTO Summit held last year in Doha, which is a deep shock for India and other developing countries;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether it is also a fact that the ongoing negotiations to enter the American markets are likely to be affected as a result of USA decision; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government to resolve the problem alongwith the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (c) The Doha Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in November, 2001, had requested the WTO Council for Trade in Goods (CTG) to examine two implementation proposals relating to the Agreement on Textiles and Clothing for making recommendations to the General Council by July 31,2002 for appropriate action. One of them required the application of the most favourable methodology for "growth-on-growth" provisions while calculating the quota levels for small suppliers. The other implementation proposal, which was relevant for all restrained countries including India, required advancing the application of the higher "growth-on-growth" factor of 27% which was otherwise due on 1 January, 2002 to be applied from 1 January, 2000.

During the formal and informal discussions, India along with certain other countries had made a strong case for acceptance of these two proposals. While the examination of the two proposals was undertaken earlier this year, no recommendation could be forwarded to the General Council due to the stand taken by the restraining members including the United States which stated that it had not agreed to two proposals at Doha and its position remained unchanged.

India and other developing countries have continued to raise this issue in the various fora-including the Mini-Ministerial meeting held at Sydney on 14-15 November, 2002. Acceptance by WTO Member Countries of the Implementation proposal on "growth-on-growth" could have led to the availability of somewhat larger market access for our exports and that of other restraining countries in the United States.

As part of ongoing market access negotiations on non-agriculture products at the WTO, countries are presently engaged in deciding on the modalities for reduction of tariffs.

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